

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education BEST PRACTICES: Outreach and Identification Strategies

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MDE SPECIAL POPULATIONS CONFERENCE
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School can be the only safe stable place for a child experiencing homelessness

“...Through it all, school is probably the only thing that has kept me going. I know that every day that I walk in those doors, I can stop thinking about my problems for the next six hours and concentrate on what is most important to me. School keeps me motivated to move on, and encourages me to find a better life for myself.”

Carrie, 2002 LeTendre Scholar

MV Outreach and Identification Strategies: Why are these SO IMPORTANT??

- **Mandated activity for all public schools per the MV Law**
- **Mandated duty of all MV Homeless Education Liaisons**
- **MDE MV Monitors review this for all districts**
- **MDE/OFS Reg. Consultants review for assigned districts**
- **Provide ways for schools to identify those students who need additional supports to meet and exceed the State academic standards**
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY... They are YOUR families, YOUR children and youth, and YOUR community!**

Who is Covered by the McKinney-Vento Act?

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and
adequate nighttime residence



WHO IS CONSIDERED HOMELESS?

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence:

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 2002)

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, RV/trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency, domestic violence, or transitional shelters

continued

WHO IS CONSIDERED HOMELESS?

- Temporary foster care placement or “awaiting foster care placement” {MI: 6 month stability period}
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live or sleep
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, under bridges, etc.
- Migratory children living in above circumstances
- Runaway or “throw-away” youth not living with legal parent/guardian

DID YOU NOTICE?

The MV Law includes NO TIME LIMIT on homelessness



*Only if there is reason to suspect fraud may additional verification be required.

How many homeless students are in your district?

According to the U.S. Department of Education:

- 10 - 20% of students living in poverty will be homeless in a given school year
- 10 - 20% of your district's free and reduced lunch count is an estimate of the number of homeless students a district should anticipate in a given school year

How many MI districts identify 10-20% of their FRL count?

What's your guess???

- 90%?
- 75%
- 50%
- 20%

How many MI districts identify
10-20% of their FRL count?

What's your guess???

- **LESS THAN 50%**

But we really don't HAVE THAT MANY homeless students...

- No families impacted by the recession?
- No families impacted by unemployment?
- No families impacted by foreclosure?
- No families with disabilities/medical crises?
- Renters whose landlords were foreclosed on?
- Youth in unsafe home environments?
- Rebellious youth challenging parents?
- No natural disasters in your region?

Common Compliance Issues

- Ineffective outreach and identification procedures and practices
- Incomplete/Missing MV Self Assessment
- District Liaison not identified in EEM
- MV Rights posters only in schools, not community (or Liaison not identified)
- No listing provided of specific locations of posters (only photos of posters)

Common Compliance Issues

- Enrollment forms:
 - Missing section on identification of living situations
 - Foster care placement not included as living situation
 - Proof of residency requirement (not waived)
- Homeless student numbers significantly less than 10% of free/reduced lunch count
- No evidence of staff PD on homeless identification provided by Liaison

Main Identification Strategies

- Homeless awareness training of school district staff groups (by MV Liaison, supported by MV Grant Coordinator)
- Active community outreach/coordination
 - Human service agencies & organizations
 - Faith-based groups
 - Community organizations
- Communication between district MV Liaisons & MV Grant Coordinator

School District Identification Strategies

- Enrollment /Residency forms
 - Avoid the word homeless
 - Include ALL living situations
 - Identify younger/older siblings
 - May not require proof or notarized forms
- Posters/Brochures
 - Placed THROUGHOUT school buildings
 - Placed throughout community, where visible to low income families or youth

School District Identification Strategies

Provide awareness training for school staff groups

- Registrars and school secretaries
- Counselors and social workers
- Truancy, attendance, drop out prevention specialists and resource officers
- Bus drivers, food service staff, maintenance
- Administrators
- Nurses
- Teachers

School District Identification Strategies

- Information/display tables at Parent-Teacher Conferences with brochures, residency questionnaires, MV information and posters
- Provide a link to MV services and Liaison contact on the district web page
- Include MV awareness information in school newsletters, school events & activities
- Other ideas?

Community Outreach

Provide information and posters where there is a frequent influx of low-income families and youth in high-risk situations:

Motels

Campgrounds

Libraries

Youth Centers

Laundromats

Utility Payment Sites

Grocery Stores

Post Office

Food Pantries

Shelters

DHS Office

Employment Agencies

Community Outreach

Coordinate with community service agencies (posters, awareness, fundraising events):

Faith-based groups/organizations

Service Clubs (Rotary, Masons, etc.)

Food pantries/food banks

Continuum of Care Organizations (CoCs)

Shelters

Subsidized Apt Complexes

Housing Resource Agencies (HARAs)

Homeless Coalitions & Advocates

Soup kitchens

Fraternities/Sororities

Project Connect events

Health Fairs

Special Notes on Foster Care

- MDE Homeless Education Program Guidance clarified the McKinney-Vento (MV) definition of “awaiting foster care placement” was updated in 2013.
- Any child/youth **in the first 6 months of any new out-of-home placement** is considered to be awaiting foster care placement - and is eligible for MV homeless education services.
- Once identified as MV eligible, services continue through the end of the current school year.
- Foster care placements will be considered temporary until a youth has been in the care of the same foster parent for 6 continuous months (referred to as the “stability period”).
- Reunification with parents is NOT considered a new placement.

Special Notes on Unaccompanied Youth

- Any youth not living with a legal parent or guardian is considered UNACCOMPANIED.
- Any Unaccompanied Youth not living with a legal parent/guardian AND living in an eligible living situation is an UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH.
- The reason the youth left home (or is not living at home) IS NOT RELEVANT.
- Our mandate is to EDUCATE such youth.
- IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT IS REQUIRED.
Questions and documents come later.



Sample Scenarios



QUESTIONS



Contacts *(Please contact in this order)*

- Your MV Regional Grant Coordinator
- MV Homeless Education Monitors

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